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LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE.

Letter from Churchland, Va.  
CHURCHLAND, WESTERN BRANCH, VA.,  
December 6, 1870.

To the Editor of the New National Era:

I am happy to inform you of a meeting which took place at the above precinct, in Norfolk county, on the 6th instant, in honor of the election to the Forty-second Congress of our distinguished Representative, the honorable and ever-faithful James H. Platt, Jr. This meeting was gotten up under the auspices of the Republican club of that local district—Mr. Wm. H. Foulke, president, and W. B. Roberts, secretary. The drum corps from faithful old Getty's station was in attendance, and added an unusual degree of honor to itself by its excellent music while taking under escort the sons and daughters of emancipation. Arriving at the speaker's stand, which was erected in front of the A. M. Church, being invited, as a speaker, we gave them the benefit of our experience of forty years in slavery, arguing the necessity of unity of action to accomplish what a benign Government had so freely and permanently inaugurated by amendment after amendment to the Federal Constitution; and last, but not least, the school question was raised to the best of our ability. Messrs. Jas. Kemp, W. B. Roberts, Foulke, and Conner gave some well-timed speeches, which were very highly applauded.

Speaking over, an ample table was spread, loaded with every comfort that could wait a dull appetite. Of the three or four hundred present all were invited to the table, and freely participated in the enjoyments of the day.

Defends the touching of these viands pure."

We regret that, for brevity's sake, we cannot give a more elaborate account of the table, as it was furnished at considerable expense.

Having paid our compliments to all the "goodies," at nightfall the beautiful moon shed down her usual flood of light. The weather being fine for out-door enjoyment, the music discoursed, "On with the dance, let joy and mirth abound." And they did not fail to improve the opportunity—at least a goodly number of them did not so fail.

We should have enjoyed ourselves hugely, but, while on the sea, in an open boat, accompanying the drum corps, along with two or three others, (eight in all,) we came night being swamped; nor did we reach Churchland with a dry shod upon us. Such was our condition that a steamer stopped to pick us up; but we struck through the dashing seas and made the fort at last. Wet, cold, and shivering, we took the conveyance that had been some hours in waiting, and, after riding about three miles, satored like a wet blanket, we were in the presence of the good people of Churchland, which place is about five miles from Norfolk, towards Cape Henry, (Crane's Island.) But, with the elements against us, as you perceive, we hit the mark. All praise is due to Messrs. Conner, Foulke, and others for the ample provisions made for our accommodation. Mr. Conner is a justice of the peace of that township, and Mr. Foulke is overseer of roads. Like your humble servant, these gentlemen are all "native born" and in the "divine institution" born. Their honesty and practical good sense have won for them a name which would do honor to the graduate of William and Mary. But I must close.

Please excuse my disconnected style, and believe me, yours as ever,

Geo. Thamon,  
Virginia Senate.

Letter from Columbus, Texas.

COLUMBUS, TEXAS, Dec. 2, 1870.

To the Editor of the New National Era:

Columbus is now the seat of war in Texas. A four days' battle, with paper bullets, closed yesterday. There was a close contest, and the result is not yet known. The Republicans were battling for free schools and free speech; the Democrats to overthrow the State police and State guards, re-establish the rule of the six shooter, and "keep the nigger in his place." The 25th senatorial district, comprising Colorado and Lavaca counties, held this election to fill vacancies occasioned by the death of Judge Foster, of the Senate, and Mr. Wilkinson, of the House. The Senate was wisely postponed till the State guards were organized. That which gives especial interest to this election is the fact that the Senate now stands 14 to 16—the less number representing the Radicals, and the greater the opposition party, whether Democratic, Conservative, or Rebel be its true name. An election is being held in Fayette county to fill a vacancy made by a Conservative member who left the Senate in disgust, after the faction of Jeff. Davis and others, who could not carry their points in the National Legislature ten years ago. The Radicals cannot count on Fayette county, and the result of the election in the 25th district decides which party shall possess the balance of power in the government of Texas.

One can get a better idea of the worth of the ballot in one election here than he could get in ten years in the North. It is free speech against the gag, State law against mob law; and whilst both parties are in suspense, it seems to me the excitement of a battle could not be much greater.

"One more ten years of peaceful life  
Where there at their array."

Hundreds of colored men marching up to the polls on equal footing with those who think them unfit to breathe the same air, to go to the same heaven, or even, as Col. Gillespie says, to go to the same hell with themselves; a few true-blue Republicans, who are cursed as carpet-baggers, and told by the supporters of the late Confederacy that they had better "sing low," the former owners of the soil, and of the men who filled it, spilling for a fight by which to overturn the election whenever the tide seems to be turning—all these make up the contest as seldom witnessed.

The Republican candidate for Senator is General R. P. Tendick, who served in the United States army, and has lived in Columbus since the close of the war. He is a German. Many Germans vote against him for the simple reason that the colored men almost unanimously vote for him. They do not like to be classed with the freedmen, seeming to lose sight of the fact that the legislation which is favorable to one class of working people is also favorable to the other. They are something like the dog who lost his piece of meat by snapping at the shadow which he supposed to be a piece of meat belonging to another dog. The Democrats made a great feast, invited colored men, and tried to make them believe that "old

masses" was their friend. They had a wagon drawn by four white horses, in which was a pair of brass band, and a big broom, which, being new, was supposed to be good for a clean sweep. Behind this, each day, rode about one hundred and fifty men, and as many colored men as could be coaxed or hired to follow them, which was usually from eight to twelve, and as a black Republican speaker said, "those few were by themselves." The Republicans make no display, but hold meetings every night. I attend with the rest of the black Republican ladies. Colonel C. C. Gillespie, once in the Confederate army, now editor of the Houston Union, the leading organ of the Texas Radicals; Senator Bell, Hon. Gray Franks, and Rev. Frank Green, (colored), have been the chief speakers. All these have been denounced and threatened by the opposition party; but they do not leave town, as they were advised. The Ku Klux Klan came to the meeting. When Colonel G. spoke, in the terms of the treatment he had received during the war, and of having been told to "sing low" and "sing loud," Allen Naylor, the colored captain of the State Guards, said "there's a hundred muskets at your back." Only twelve of the guards were on duty around the ballot-box. It was thought best to excite the mob as little as possible, as many stayed away from the polls last year rather than walk up beside a row of blue-coated soldiers.

Everybody feared that there would be bloodshed before the four days passed; but they are ended, and I hear of nothing like it, except that the broadest procession hurried up to run over a poor old colored man, and seeing that he was likely to die, stopped laughing and sneaked off, one by one, till of the long line of hostilities nothing was left. Gen. Tendick assisted in carrying poor old Uncle Peter into the court-house, and procured a doctor for him. He was alive this morning.

Last night the polls were closed, and all over town guns were fired till past 12 o'clock. He roared, "Hurrah for Tendick!" and there, "Hurrah for Thompson!" This morning we learned the result of the four days' struggle. Tendick is only 212 votes ahead, and Lavaca county, where we expected him to be in the minority, is yet to hear from him! Both parties are filled with hopes and fears, and so the day passes. Friday night, at 6 P. M., the messenger sent to Lavaca county had not returned. Two colored men rode up to my door, and calling for another man to accompany them, said they were going to meet the messenger, about whom some uneasiness was felt. A few minutes later I heard a great shout, and hearing out, I believe I heard the cry, "Hurrah for Tendick!" from every man, woman, and child in Freedman Town; and they kept up, never did I hear such rejoicing. Camp-meetings were held on the 4th and 5th of July through the shade. When the Emancipation Proclamation was issued these people dared not say so much as "I am glad." They could only kneel by their bedside and thank God in the darkness that their chains were falling away from them. Now they can lift up their voices in thanksgiving that they are deep by the foundations of liberty broad and ample for their children and their children's children. Who would'st doubt?

JULIA B. NELSON.

The Unearthed Letter of Admiral Porter.

NORTH AMERICAN SQUADRON,  
U. S. FLAGSHIP MALVERN,  
CAPE PEARL RIVER, JANUARY 21, 1865.

MY DEAR SIR: I received your kind letter of the 17th inst., and thank you warmly for the confidence you reposed in my good opinion that this place could be taken. To the Navy Department alone is the country indebted for the capture of this rebel stronghold; for had it not been for your perseverance in keeping the fleet here, and your constant proposition made to the army, nothing would have been done. As it was, after the proposition had been received, and General Grant promised that troops should be sent, it was not done until General Butler consented to let the matter go on, and then he hoped to reap some little credit for the explosion of the powder-boat. Now, the country gives General Grant the credit of inaugurating the expedition, when, on both occasions, he permitted it to go improperly provided. As the first place, it had neither head nor tail as far as the army was concerned. In the second place, he (Grant) sent too few men, when he ought to have calculated that the rebels would have more strongly defended the works after seeing what a narrow escape they had. Nothing was expected, and the result was a disaster. The gallant band of sailors who were sent to take the place, and the termination to win on the part of the army, was the victory. The gallant band of sailors who fearlessly went into the works amidst a shower of cannon and bullets, braved the enemy's attention away from the assault on the land side, and enabled the troops to capture the place securely. I don't say this to detract from the gallantry of the soldiers, for never did men fight harder or more handsomely than did our troops that day. Now that the most important fort on the coast has been gained, as usual you will hear and read what the navy did, and the work was "not substantially injured as a defensive work." To Gen. Grant, who is always willing to take the credit when anything is done, and equally ready to lay the blame of the failure on the navy, I feel under the necessity of saying, I feel under no obligations for receiving and allowing a report to be spread from his headquarters that there were three days when the navy might have operated and did not. He did not feel at all what the navy did, and he did not say so. I feel under no obligation to say, saying "the only way in which the place could be taken was by running the ships past the batteries," showing evidently that he had not studied the hydrography of Cape Fear River, and that he did not know what the navy did in the wooden forts when they were first taken up fight. Any fort in rebellion can be taken if we can only get in reach of it. I have served with the Lieutenant General before, where I never worked so hard in my life to make a man understand I did not do him wrong, and I never notice in his reports that the navy did him any service, when without the help it has given him all the way through he never would have been Lieutenant General. He wants magnanimity, like most officers of the army, and is so avowed as regards fame that he will never, if he can help it, do justice to our department. When the rebels write the history of this war, then, and only then, will the country be made to feel what the navy has done.

Yours truly,  
JULIA B. NELSON.

The Remarkable Order.

WASHINGTON, DEC. 5.—Admiral Porter, after visiting the President on Saturday, sent him the following letter. It will be seen that it fully corroborates the view taken of their relations since the outbreak of the rebellion. The order, printed this day, is as follows: "The President has been informed that there are many rumors about to-night as to the state of feeling between the President and Admiral Porter, to print which might do injustice to both. The only preparation which the Admiral can make is to be as candid as possible. The letter to the President is as follows:

MR. PRESIDENT: My impulse, on reading the letter published in the New York World, was to go to you at once and pronounce it a fabrication, for as such I consider it; but as I participated for as long as six years ago, and published in the New York World, I determined to ascertain fully if I had ever issued such a letter before addressing you on the subject. Neither myself nor my secretary, who has served with me eight years, could recall to mind any circumstances connected with the kind. I could not conceive that I had uttered sentiments I know I never felt, and which are so at variance with those that I have uniformly expressed to you. The letter, it appears, was written by a man who had never been the heart of the man that had been guilty of so grave a breach of confidence; and depraved indeed must be the character who, to gratify his mischievous instincts, could make public a confidential letter, written perhaps under great excitement, and which, if not even remembered, it seems like a poor return for your uniform confidence and kindness to me, and I am too glad that I remember nothing connected with the letter.

At about the date of the letter I had passed through a long and fatiguing campaign, and Fisher, and my numerous fleet was almost overpowered by the elements. I saw the coveted prize within my grasp, and then slip from me. For another month I had to battle with the storm of winter, and I was anchored on an open coast, with the responsibility of the fleet on my hands, my mind and body harassed by extraordinary fatigues. The whole nation was looking on excitedly, dreading a defeat that might prolong a contest that was wearying the public mind, and I was not only a man of war, but a man of peace. I know what I had to undergo bodily and mentally. I presume it was while under this excitement that I wrote the letter which you say has made you lose your faith in human nature. I have no recollection of it, any more than I would have of the day when I was six years ago. 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